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the French ex-premier can fail to recognize the characteristic quality of the following bit of persiflage put into his mouth by the author. In a conversation that occurs just before the real business of the session begins, Clemenceau is made to say that the smaller Allies are "like a lot of hens being held by the feet and carried to market—although all doomed to the same fate, they contrive to fight each other while awaiting it."

The dialogues are dramatic, too, in their ordering. The entrance of the Japanese question occurs at just the psychological moment, and what happens thereafter is just enough to express through action the real motives involved.

Not often does the author permit himself to be ironical without regard to his necessary purpose. The state of affairs at the Conference might have been made clear, no doubt, without the inclusion of the remark attributed to President Wilson at the unfortunate juncture when the Irish delegates seek an audience: "Who are they that thus intrude upon this inner conference where we are openly arriving at open covenants?"—and doubtless the President has too lively a sense of humor ever to have said anything of the sort. But the speech is too good to be spared. It is exactly the sort of speech that Mr. Dooley might invent if he were treating President Wilson as he once treated President McKinley.

Mr. Beck has produced in these dialogues a kind of literature that is not often written after so much cool, thoughtful preparation, and that is seldom found to be, as in this case, profound and exact as well as amusing.

"SIMSADUS: LONDON." By John Langdon Leighton. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

"Simsadus: London" was the cable address of Admiral Sims' London office—dissected, Sims, Admiral, U. S. The author served in the Naval Intelligence Department and Historical Section in London.

Most war books, however admirable in spirit, novel or valuable in contents, make rather trying reading. They almost necessarily present a great array of facts and impressions in no very systematic order and with rather high tension of expressed or half-suppressed emotion. This is not to be disapproved, of course. Somehow that part of the world that did not go to war must be made to realize what the war was like. Still, one does not envy the historians who will have to canvass all this material. And it is something of a relief to find a war-book that does not strain one's nerves, or overwhelm one with facts, and that has hardly any note in it of propaganda, or eulogy, or criticism.

The Navy had its trials and hardships, but it saw less horror than the Army. Not that the naval men, British or American, were not anxious for a stand-up fight. "Flotin' around that blinkin' Nor' Sea," said one English tar, "waitin' till those bloody 'uns get grit henough to fight, and yet always 'opin' that they will fight some di, 'tisin't the kind of life for an hambitious or warlike chap the likes of me." It isn't that one underrates the heroism either of the army men or of the naval men. It is simply that one is glad to turn to a story of efficiency

that doesn't make one feel continually ashamed and horrified at the thought of what that efficiency cost.

Mr. Leighton has given a clear-cut, well-ordered account of what our Navy did in connection with the British Navy. Its greatest merit, perhaps, is that it tells us the plain facts about the submarines.

In April, 1917, the German submarine war was much nearer success than the public in the Allied countries realized. At this time the English were doing about eighty per cent of what was being done to ward off the peril. American destroyers arrived in April, and more in May and June, and the situation gradually changed. In charge of the American forces was Admiral Sims, who in 1905 had been instrumental, through Theodore Roosevelt, in changing the whole gunnery system of the United States Navy; who in 1909 was distinguished as the first officer below the rank of captain to have command of a first-class battleship; and who in 1910 made the famous speech pledging the aid of the American Navy to the British Navy in time of absolute need. Sims reported that the United States must furnish merchant vessels in the near future and naval and military aid at once; he also recommended that the United States Navy should operate as part of the British forces—a wise and magnanimous decision. After American naval bases had been established at Queenstown, Brest, and Gibraltar, our Navy was effectively co-operating with that of Great Britain. By September, 1917, the convoy system, an enormous undertaking, was in working order. The critical period was safely passed by the fall of 1917. In September the losses from submarines were only thirty per cent of what they had been in April.

Such, in bare outline, are the facts of the submarine contest. Much, though not all of this, was unfolded to us in the newspapers from day to day. But there was a great deal that the papers could not tell us, and that many of us have not, even now, an inkling of. Why was it futile to attempt to bottle up the German subs at their bases by means of mines? Why was the mine-barrage in the North Sea not attempted until nearly the end of the war? Why was it ridiculous to suppose that the Germans had submarine bases on the Mexican coast or elsewhere near the United States? Mr. Leighton answers such questions clearly and satisfactorily. How many persons know that the appearance of German submarines in American waters was a sign of German failure? True, during July and August they sank off the American coast about twenty per cent of the total tonnage sunk in two months. This effort, however, was but testimony to the success of the convoy system. But for that the submarines might have been far more profitably employed elsewhere.

People supposed that hundreds of submarines were at sea at the same time. There were about 144 German submarines in commission, and about the waters of England and France there were from sixteen to twenty-eight cruising every day. The low percentage is explained by the fact that after a cruise it was necessary to keep one of these boats in port for overhauling and repairs for a length of time about three times as great as the period at sea. Stories of the sighting of submarines at sea were often based on error. "Few of our soldiers ever saw a submarine."

On the other hand, only one submarine was sunk in every thirty-nine attempts. Commanders of destroyers and other vessels often supposed the submarine sunk or damaged when this was not the case. The reasons for such mistakes are simple and well worth knowing. Is it not strange that more troopships were not torpedoed? The reason is that to the Germans the game was not worth the candle. Strange, but true! According to their conception, their best policy was to try to starve England, and they were probably right.

But the strangest and most interesting part of the book is that which relates to the British Intelligence Office. We had great respect for the German system of espionage. It was efficient. Nevertheless, the Germans not infrequently got wrong information, which in war is much worse than no information. The British, on the other hand, says the author, always had the right information. They knew, at certain times, where every enemy submarine was. This they accomplished by means of radio stations. To be sure, the messages from the German subs, conveyed in a highly secret code, might be undecipherable; but the direction from which the message came could be determined. "The Admiralty took the greatest care that this method of locating submarines should not be discovered by the enemy, for they regarded it as the greatest secret in their possession; and there is no evidence to show that the Germans ever did discover it."

Here, then, is information clearing up many obscure points about the naval conduct of the war—a reassuring account, showing the efficiency and precision, the full knowledge and the cool calculation, with which our Navy and the British Navy worked together during the last critical period of the conflict.